

III. REMARKS

1. Independent claims 1 and 12 have been amended to delete "combination thereof". No new matter has been introduced by way of the amendments made to the claims.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 5 to 12, 16 to 22, 24 to 27, and 29 to 32 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The Examiner stated under Section 2 of the Office Action: "The claims recite an operating module that includes a number of whitening stages and combinations thereof. ... it is not clear exactly which particular combination is being referred to in the claims."

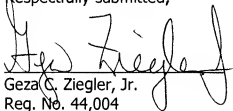
As discussed in the previous response, page 13, lines 4 to 9 of the original specification states "It is possible to combine any two or more of the techniques described in Figures 1-3 and 5." As such, "combinations" include any two or more of the whitening techniques (a) to (c) in the claims. Nevertheless, to expedite the prosecution of this application, the term "combinations thereof" in independent claims 1 and 12 has been deleted without prejudice or disclaimer.

In view of the amendments and the remarks, and having dealt with all the objections raised by the examiner, reconsideration and allowance of the application is courteously requested.

Should any unresolved issues remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment for any fees associated with this communication or credit any over payment to Deposit Account No. 16-1350.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date

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